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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTU #0495 1301440
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 091440Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4976
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 1027

UNCLAS TUNIS 000495

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA/MAG (HOPKINS/HARRIS)
LONDON AND PARIS FOR NEA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [LE](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: TUNISIAN MFA STATEMENT ON CONCERN OVER SITUATION
IN LEBANON

¶1. (U) On May 8, the Tunisian Foreign Ministry released a statement regarding its concern about the situation in Lebanon. Text of the MFA communique (official Tunisia-Africa Press Agency translation) is as follows:

BEGIN TEXT:

Tunisia is following with deep concern the evolution of the security situation in Lebanon, after the serious events which took place in some Lebanese areas, since yesterday, and which risk to become uncontrollable.

Tunisia calls upon all Lebanese protagonists to show restraint, prioritize Lebanon's higher interest, and preserve the country's national unity, security, and stability.

It reiterates its call on all sides to avoid escalation and violence and prioritize dialogue and peaceful means to settle their differences.

Tunisia voices hope that the brotherly Lebanese people will manage to overcome this difficult juncture, in such a way as to preserve Lebanon from all dangers and negative fallout.

END TEXT.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: With this public statement, the Government of Tunisia is maintaining its traditional moderate stance vis-a-vis regional issues. The MFA communique was covered in the Tunisian press, and echoed in editorials in some media outlets. Its moderate message has not fully filtered down to the most popular Arabic daily ash-Shourouq, however, which is known for its anti-American slant. The coverage of events in Lebanon in the May 8 and 9 editions of ash-Shourouq, for example, cast Nasrallah in the role of the hero and showcased his anti-American rhetoric. End Comment.
GODEC